

NATIONAL RECOGNITION LEADS FOND DU LAC GOOD NEWS IN 2010

Amidst extensive local-media coverage of the misdeeds of a few City of Fond du Lac employees in 2010, positive developments involving the City might have slipped from view. There were many and I'll list here what I have arguably selected as the "Top Ten" for the year.

Heading the list was national recognition for our City. In October, Forbes.com ranked Fond du Lac 14th on its list of the "best small cities to raise a family." Then, in a December Farmers Insurance Group ranking of the "safest communities in the nation", Fond du Lac appeared as number 18.

Good news in a lagging economy came in second. The start of a "spec" building in our Fox Ridge Business Park and the beginning of work to turn the former Rolling Meadows Nursing Home into a new hotel/conference center, offering a water park and banquet seating for 600, headlined visible signs of local optimism. Upgrades in the central city combined for third place. The new and collaborative Y/Boys & Girls Club opened. The Calumet Apartments received a federal grant for upgrades and a service station which had been a source of suspect activity went out of business. Parallel improvements to Military Road, the addition of new and affordable housing and increased use of Hamilton Park added to the prospects for brighter days in that part of our city.

Fourth, was the announcement of visionary concepts for an arts and entertainment district in the downtown area. Commitments for increased parking and the conversion of a church in the area for commercial use sparked the effort. At number five, were settlements with all City labor organizations for 2010 and 2011 featuring no cost-of-living increases for those two years.

On-time and on-budget completion of the reconstruction of a major portion of Park Avenue and rebuilds of bridges on Doty and Grove Sts. placed sixth. The meritorious actions of City staffers was seventh. The Inspections Division's Lydell Wier led on-lookers who rallied to lift a car off a toddler being drug down Main St. The Police Department's Aaron Goldstein was named state "trainer of the year" and a courageous employee stepped forward to notify authorities of the suspicious actions of now former MIS employees.

Finishing eighth was the City Fire Department's signing on to participate in MABAS (the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System). MABAS facilitates timely reinforcement from other jurisdictions in emergency situations requiring additional resources.

The continued popularity of two Fond du Lac stalwarts was ninth. Both our public library and senior center served a record number of patrons in 2010. Years of innovative programming and attentive customer service are the hallmarks of those Fond du Lac institutions. Rounding out the top ten was the spectacular holiday lights of Lakeside Park. The annually robust holiday lighting display was enhanced this year by the relocation of the Nemesis Metals-produced, animated musical light display to a more viewer-friendly area.

The events of 2010 proved again that Fond du Lac continues to be a great place to live, work and play ... and to securely raise a family.